

Indiana Disproportionality Committee
Racial Disproportionality/Overrepresentation in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems

Glossary of Terms

Assessment: to evaluate for reasons why something exists (OJJDP, Handout).

Bigotry: prejudice and/or discrimination against one or all members of a particular group based on negative perceptions of their beliefs and practices or on negative group stereotypes (Anti-Defamation League).

Children of Color: Children belonging to various cultural, ethnic, and racial communities, primarily African American/Black, Latino/Hispanic, and Native/Indigenous American (Child Welfare League of America - 3, 2003, pg. 4).

Cultural Competence: The ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and faiths or religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, tribes, and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each. Cultural competence is a vehicle used to broaden our knowledge and understanding of individuals and communities through a continuous process of learning about the cultural strengths of others and integrating their unique abilities and perspectives into our lives (Child Welfare League of America – 2).

Discrimination (an action): the behavior that can follow prejudicial thinking. Discrimination is the denial of justice and fair treatment in many arenas, including employment, housing and political rights (Anti-Defamation League).

Disproportionality: refers to a situation in which a particular racial/ethnic group of children are represented ...at a higher percentage than other racial/ethnic groups (Child Welfare League of America - 1).

Disproportionate Minority Confinement: Under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), disproportionate minority confinement (DMC) exists when the proportion of youths detained or confined in secure detention facilities, secure correctional facilities, jails and lockups who are members of minority groups exceed their groups' proportions in the general population (OJJDP)

Disproportionate Minority Contact: Contact address the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system at all points in the juvenile justice process (Disproportionate Minority Contact, n.d., OJJDP).

Diversity: A situation that includes representation of multiple (ideally all) groups within a prescribed environment, such as a university or a workplace. This word most commonly refers to differences between cultural groups, although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups, e.g. diversity within the Asian-American culture includes Korean Americans and Japanese Americans. An emphasis on accepting and respecting cultural differences by recognizing that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another underlies the current usage of the term (University of Maryland: Diversity Database).

Ethnicity: A quality assigned to a specific group of people historically connected by a common national origin or language. Ethnic classification is used for identification rather than differentiation (University of Maryland: Diversity Database).

Evaluation: to assess the effectiveness of intervention strategy (OJJDP, Handout).

Indigenous: Originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides (University of Maryland: Diversity Database).

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Identification: to determine the extent of why something exists (OJJDP, Handout).

Intervention: solution/concept to address identified causations (OJJDP, Handout).

Juvenile: will refer to citizens of the United States between the ages of 10-17.

Minority: a part of a population differing from others in some characteristics and often subjected to differential treatment; the smaller in number of two groups constituting a whole (Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Monitoring: changes/trends documented to adjust intervention strategies as needed (OJJDP, Handout).

Overrepresentation: particularly in reference to African American children has traditionally been used to define the high numbers of children of color in the child welfare system that are larger than their population in the general population (Child Welfare League of America -1).

Prejudice (a feeling): Prejudice is prejudging, making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge. Prejudicial thinking is based on stereotypes. Prejudice is a feeling or attitude (Anti-Defamation League).

Race: Classification of humans based on genetic characteristics. 2. Classification of people based on common nationality, history, or experiences (University of Maryland).

Racism: Prejudice and/or discrimination based on the myth of race. Racists believe that some groups are born superior to others and, in the name of protecting their race from "contamination," they justify the domination and destruction of races they consider to be inferior to their own (Anti-Defamation League).

Scapegoating: The action of blaming an individual or group for something when, in reality, there is no one person or group responsible for the problem. It means blaming another person or group for problems in society because of that person's group identity. Prejudicial thinking and discriminatory acts can lead to scapegoating. Members of the disliked group are denied employment, housing, political rights, social privileges, or a combination of these, and has been the targets of violence and murder during periods of social upheaval (Anti-Defamation League).

Stereotype (an idea): A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences. Even positive stereotypes, such as Asians are good at math and computers, have a negative impact (Anti-Defamation League).

Underrepresentation: refers to under-representation of minorities in the provision of services (Race Matters Consortium).

Youth: the period between childhood and maturity (Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

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Resources

Definitions have been adapted or copied from:

- ❖ Anti-Defamation League's: A World of Difference Institute (Hardcopy)
- ❖ Child Welfare League of America (1) <http://www.cwla.org/articles/cv0211minorities.htm>
- ❖ Child Welfare League of America (2) <http://www.cwla.org/newsevents/terms.htm>
- ❖ Child Welfare League of America (3) <http://www.cwla.org/programs/culture/disproportionatestatement.pdf>
- ❖ Diversity: Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diversity>
- ❖ Indiana Disproportionate Committee Scope (Hardcopy)
- ❖ OJJDP <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>
- ❖ OJJDP Disproportionate Minority Contact (Handout).
- ❖ Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary>
- ❖ Race Matters Consortium, Hill, R.B. (2004) <http://www.racemattersconsortium.org>
- ❖ University of Maryland: Diversity Database <http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/Diversity/Reference/divdic.html>